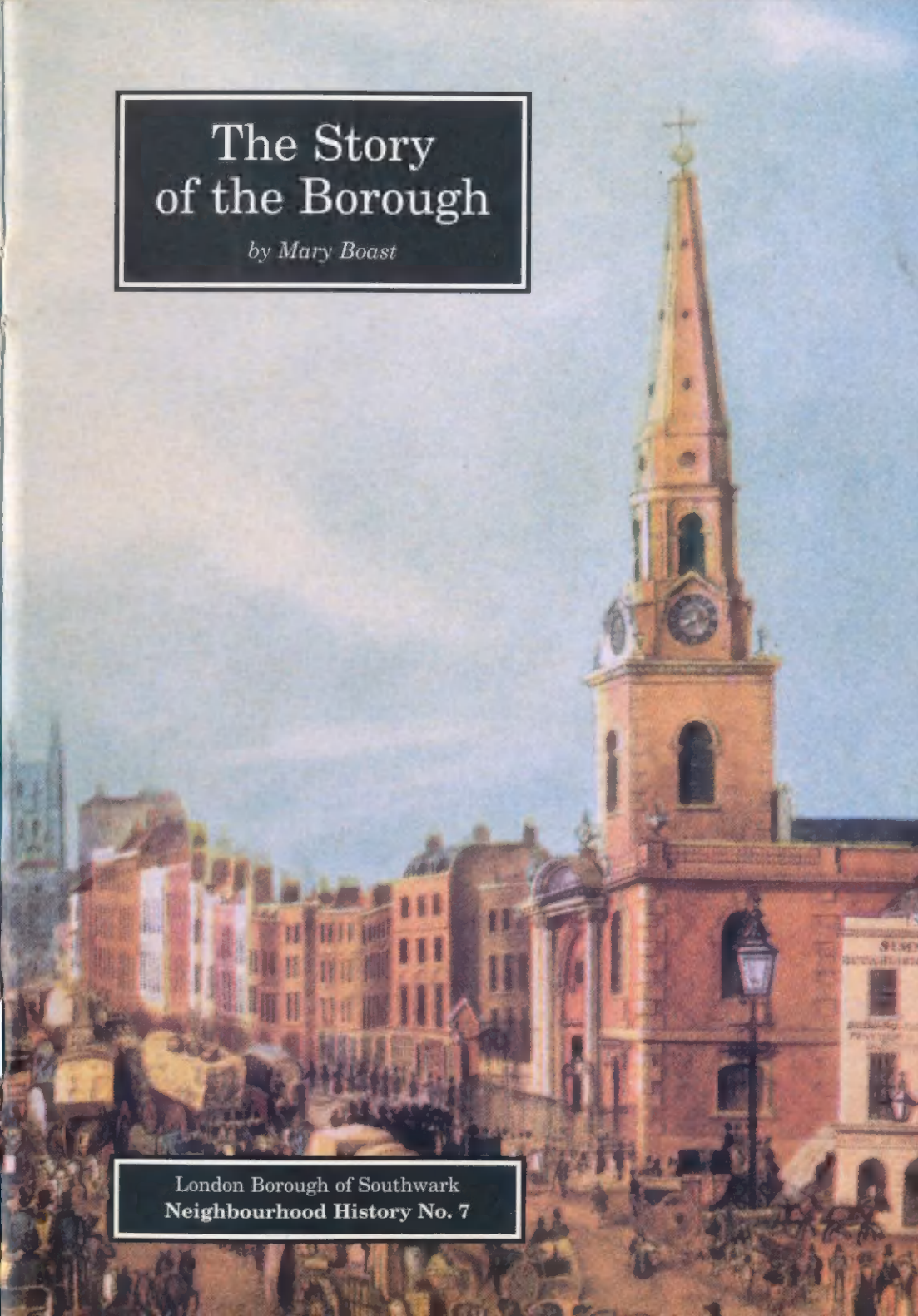


The Story of the Borough

by Mary Boast

London Borough of Southwark
Neighbourhood History No. 7





An aerial view of Roman Southwark in c. AD75 by Peter Froste

The Story of The Borough

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Cover illustrations

Front cover: Borough High Street, watercolour by William Knox, 1826*.

Inside front cover: An aerial view of Roman Southwark by Peter Froste.

Inside back cover: Southwark Town Hall, Borough High Street, 1828.

**By courtesy of the Fine Art Society, London.*

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The Story of 'The Borough'

This booklet is a brief, simple introduction to the history of one part of the London Borough of Southwark. It is written mainly for younger readers who live or go to school in, or visit, the neighbourhood around Borough High Street, traditionally known as 'The Borough'. No.8 in the series covers Bankside and Blackfriars Road, the two parts overlap. Southwark Cathedral and London Bridge, important equally in the history of 'The Borough', are covered in No.8 and also some general topics for the whole area, such as industries and railways.

Some suggestions for further reading are given at the end of the book most of which are available at or through any Southwark library. Anyone wishing to make a more detailed study should visit the Local Studies Library, 211 Borough High Street, SE1 1JA. Tel: 0171 403 3507. This has a comprehensive collection of books, maps, illustrations, press cuttings, microfilms and archives covering all parts of the London Borough of Southwark. The opening hours may be obtained from any library. An appointment in advance is not necessary but it is advisable to book a microfilm reader in advance. School parties are welcome by prior arrangement.

Roman Southwark

Any weekday, Borough High Street, the road that leads to London Bridge, is jammed with cars, lorries and buses making their way to and from the City of London. How long has traffic of some kind been using this route? - Nearly two thousand years. Almost on the line of the modern street was a road built by the Romans, leading to a bridge and the Roman city of Londinium. Archaeologists have discovered various traces of it, most recently during the construction of the Jubilee Line.

In Roman times marching men, chariots, horses and carts were the traffic on the road. Part of a shoe worn by a Roman, or a Romano-Briton, who walked along this road, is now on show in the Cuming Museum, and the base of a standard carried by a standard-bearer of the Roman army was found in Stoney Street.

Borough High Street was the junction of two Roman highways which met near the present site of St George the Martyr Church. Old Kent Road and Tabard Street are on the line of Watling Street from Dover and the English Channel. Newington Causeway was part of Stane Street from Chichester and the Sussex coast.

When the Romans first arrived it was no easy task to build a road to the Thames crossing. The riverside was mostly mud and marshy ground, with various inlets from the river. In 1958 remains of a Roman boat were found where Guy's Hospital now stands. Some of the timbers are in the Cuming Museum. Borough High Street was built on the only stretch of firmer and higher ground, though even this was really three, separate, sandy islands. Skilled Roman road-builders bridged the gaps between them by first making ditches to drain the water away, then laying a foundation of timber logs, and on top of them putting a firm road surface. On the site of John Harvard Library archaeologists discovered the Roman road just to the east of the modern road, bridging what had been the water channel between two old islands.

A large Roman suburb grew up on either side of the road. Its history is everywhere buried beneath your feet. Whenever a building is demolished, archaeologists excavate and find evidence of Roman houses or objects the Romans used. Sometimes, for

example at a large site in Southwark Street, they uncovered foundations of earlier buildings below later ones. Britain was part of the Roman empire for nearly 400 years and buildings were demolished and others erected on the site, just as now old houses are demolished for new developments. In fact people lived here even before Roman times. Below all the Roman remains was found evidence of what might have been an Iron Age Settlement.

Wealthy Romans lived in comfort and style. Bricks used for the hypocaust system of under-floor heating have been found and parts of the mosaic paving which covered these floors. Rooms were decorated with pictures and designs painted on the wall-plaster. Finds from excavations on show at the Cuming Museum include also pots and dishes of red Samian pottery from Gaul (France), large 'amphorae' or jars for wine, small pottery oil lamps, bone needles and hair pins. A green glass cup found near Tooley Street has pictures of gladiators fighting.

The most exciting discovery was in the crypt below Southwark Cathedral where, in 1977, archaeologists found a Roman well and in it several sculptures. One was a stone figure of a hunter god with a bow in his left hand and a dog by his side. Another was a marble dolphin, probably from a statue of Neptune, the sea-god. Why these objects were dumped in a well is a mystery. Perhaps, when Roman Britain became Christian, people wanted to be rid of their old gods.

Not much is known about Southwark immediately after the Romans left. Nature took over and perhaps crops were grown where once there had been fine buildings. A document written about 500 years later has the first known reference to 'the Borough of Southwark'.

*Roman figure of a hunter god.
Found beneath Southwark Cathedral*



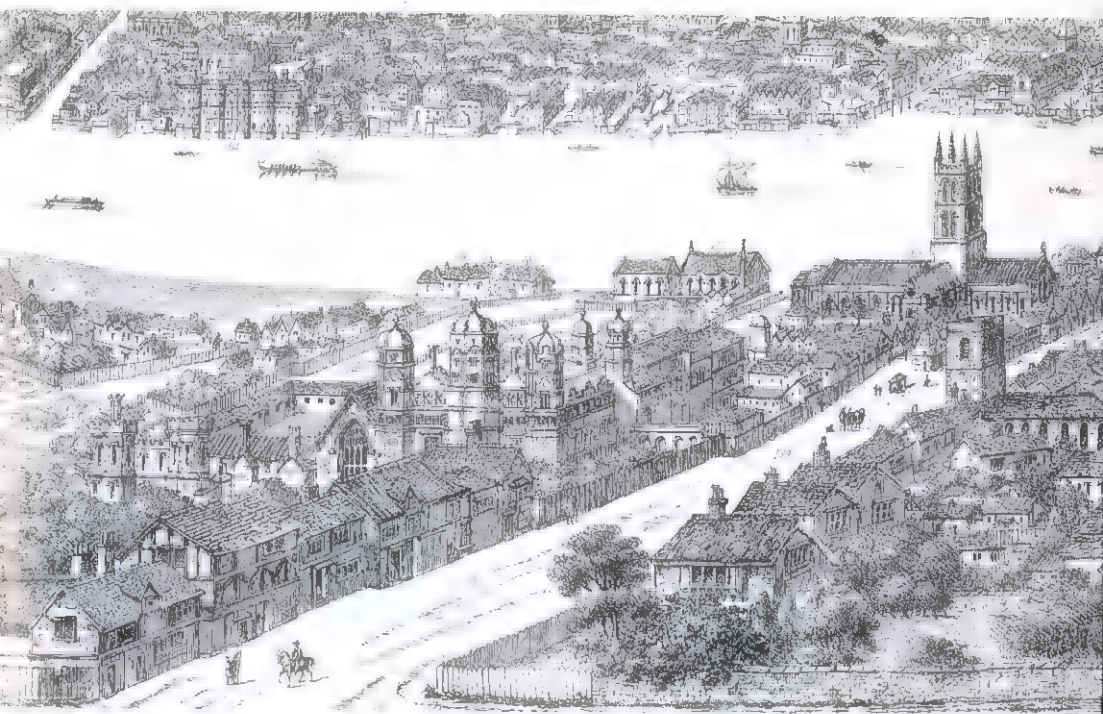
'The Borough'

People who live in or around Borough High Street have good reason to say they live in 'the Borough'. Southwark was listed as a 'burgh', or borough, as early as 910AD in the Burghal Hideage, a list of 'burghs' with their 'hides', an old measurement of land. Of course a 'burgh' in those days meant something very different from ■ modern London Borough such as Southwark. It meant a stronghold, with fortifications to protect the river crossing. This was the original 'Southwark'. In the Burghal Hideage Southwark was spelt *Suthringa geweorche*, 'Surrey work', that is, the defence works of the people of Surrey. Later it was spelt *Sudwerca*, the South 'work' of the City of London.

Southwark is described in Domesday Book, the great survey of England compiled for William the Conqueror in 1086. It mentions a 'monasterium', a minster or large church, probably where Southwark Cathedral now stands, and various houses belonging to great Norman lords. By 1295 Southwark was important enough to have two Members of Parliament, the first district of London outside the City to be granted this right.

The oldest picture of 'the Borough' is part of *The Panorama of London* by Anthonis van den Wyngaerde c1544. It shows Borough High Street, sometimes called 'long Southwark', with buildings along both sides of it, and near the river a church which you would recognise as Southwark Cathedral. Its old name was the Priory of St Mary Overie. Later it was known as St Saviour's church and in 1905 it became a cathedral. In the foreground of a picture is the old St George the Martyr Church with a square tower, now replaced by a spire. Opposite the church is a grand palace, Suffolk Place, the home of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, whose wife Mary was a sister of King Henry VIII. Later the king took over the building and used it as a mint for making coins. The palace and mint have long disappeared but there is still a Mint Street and the new office building at the corner of Marshalsea Road has been named Brandon House.

If you look up Borough High Street from Brandon House you may just discern something of the old street pattern that Wyngaerde saw. Where the War Memorial now stands, there has always been



Southwark and London Bridge, based on a View of London by Wyngaerde

a triangular piece of ground between two roads - Borough High Street and Stoney Street. In the Middle Ages, St Margaret's Church stood on this triangle and part of Borough High Street was called St Margaret's Hill. Later the church was used as a courthouse and prison and later still a town hall was built on the site. Now a bank occupies the same piece of ground.

In Wyngaerde's time, behind the buildings along Borough High Street there was almost nothing but gardens and fields. Gradually all this open countryside was built over with crowded streets. Even in 1598 John Stow, the great historian of London, could write "The Borough of Southwark ... consisteth of divers streets, ways and winding lanes, all full of buildings. As a subsidy to the king, this borough yieldeth about ... eight hundred pounds, which is more than any one city in England payeth, except London."

The Borough inns

The sign of St George as a knight in armour hangs out over the pavement of Borough High Street. Go through the gateway beneath it and you seem to be in another world. The George Inn, with its galleries, looks like the inns of Shakespeare's day, except that then there would have been galleried buildings surrounding three sides of the inn-yard, instead of only one as today.

Once Borough High Street was lined with inns like this. Until 1750 London Bridge was the only bridge across the Thames at London and the street leading to it always had many travellers. At the Borough inns, they could get a drink, a meal, or a bed for the night, before setting out, or at the end of their journeys. The George, and many others, are marked on a map of 1542 and very clearly on the map of London made by John Rocque in 1746.

The most famous inn was the Tabard. In the Middle Ages pilgrims going to visit the shrine of St Thomas a Becket in Canterbury Cathedral gathered here before setting out on their journey. As poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote in the *Prologue* to his *Canterbury Tales* -

*'It happened in that season that one day
In Southwark at the Tabard as I lay...
At night there came into that hostelry
Some nine and twenty in a company...
That towards Canterbury meant to ride.
The rooms and stables of the inn were wide.'*

(Modern English version by Nevill Coghill)

From the Tabard the pilgrims set off down 'Kent Street', now renamed Tabard Street, for the Old Kent Road to Canterbury.

The Tabard, like many of the inns, had to be rebuilt in 1676 after Southwark's own 'Great Fire', ten years after the Great Fire of London. The George was rebuilt then, so the present building is over 300 years old. Through the window to the bar you can see the oak beams of the ceiling and the big old fireplace.

In the 18th century the inns became more and more busy as coaches, horses and carriers' carts set off regularly from them for

all parts of southern England. Services from the George included coaches four times a day to Maidstone, twice to Dover and Canterbury and daily to Brighton and Hastings. After leaving the inn-yards the horses' hooves would clatter over the cobblestones until they reached the Stones' End, where the police station now stands, and then, through the toll-gate, and out on to the turnpike road. The route to Kent, via narrow Kent Street, got so congested that in 1814 Great Dover Street was built as a by-pass.



Tabard Inn c. 1870

Charles Dickens knew the Borough inns. In his novel, *Pickwick Papers*, Mr Pickwick first met Sam Weller at the largest of them, the White Hart.

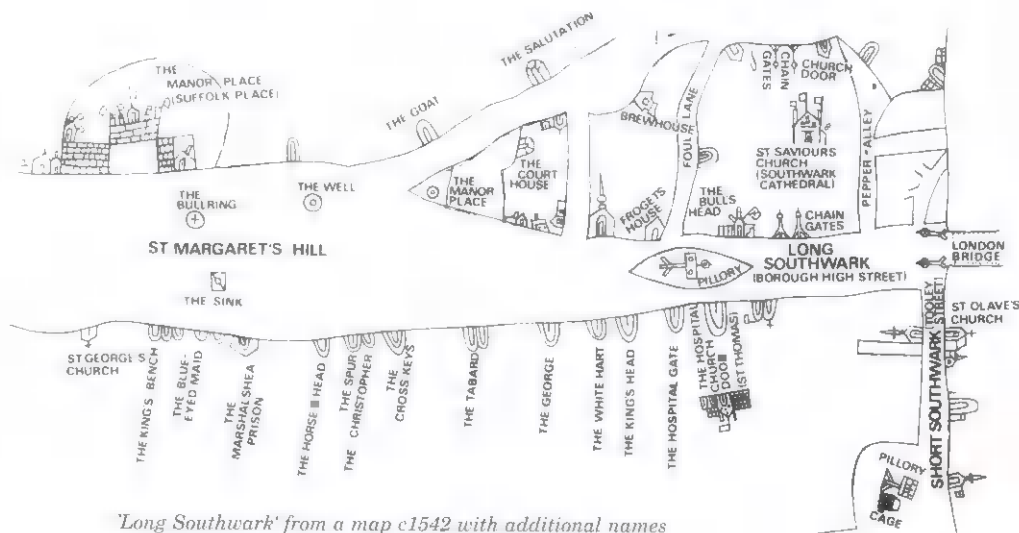
It was in 1836, when the railway came to Southwark, that the inns began to go out of business. People no longer travelled by horse-drawn coaches, but by train from London Bridge Station. All the inns were demolished, except the George, and of this two sides, and the stables, had gone before the National Trust took it over in 1937. Now it is the only inn of its kind left in London and tourists from all over the world come to visit it. Plays have sometimes been acted in the inn-yard as they were in the inn-yards of Shakespeare's day.

The other inns have gone, but not without trace. Leading off Borough High Street you see many narrow alleyways which were once entrances to inn-yards. Some have their names up - White Hart Yard, Talbot Yard (the later name of the Tabard) and Mermaid Court. In King's Head Yard there is a Victorian pub, but the sign over the door is a head of King Henry VIII, preserved from the old inn. In the Middle Ages this inn was the Pope's Head, but when Henry VIII quarrelled with the Pope the landlord must have renamed his inn! Another interesting sign is the royal coat of arms over the King's Arms, Newcomen Street, which was once over the gateway to Old London Bridge.

Between nos. 52 and 54 Borough High Street a little opening leads to what was once probably the Goat Inn, but is now known as Calvert's Buildings. This peaceful courtyard with its overhanging upper storey is a corner of very old Southwark which was not destroyed in the fire of 1676.

Southwark Fair and Borough Market

*"From various parts, from various ends repair
A vast mix'd multitude to Southwark Fair."*



'Long Southwark' from a map c1542 with additional names and modernised spelling.

Every September for 300 years Borough High Street was a scene of great excitement, the annual Southwark Fair, in the Middle Ages sometimes known called 'St Margaret's Fair', from the nearby St Margaret's Church. The right to hold a Fair was granted to the City in 1462. Originally it lasted three days, but later fourteen.

There were all sorts of entertainments at the Fair. On the 21st September 1668 Samuel Pepys wrote in his famous diary "to Southwark Fair - and there saw a puppet show of (Dick) Whittington." He mentioned also that he left his purse with an inn-keeper for fear of pick-pockets! That other great diarist, John Evelyn, described a visit on 13th September 1660. "I saw in Southwark at St Margaret's Fair, monkeys and asses dance and do other feats on the tight rope".

In 1733 the artist, William Hogarth, painted a picture of the Fair. In the centre is a drawing of a the Wooden Horse of Troy and a raised platform on which the story is being acted. A copy of the play *The Siege of Troy* 'presented ... in Southwark during the Fair' is in the Local Studies Library. In the background of Hogarth's picture is the old St George the Martyr Church, with a rope fixed to the top of the tower and a man sliding down it.

*"So from the steeple Violante flies
Loud shouts and acclamations rend the skies"*

Among other entertainments are a monkey with a hat on and a sword at his waist, and musicians with bagpipes, drums and trumpets. A poster advertises 'Maximilian, the Southwark Giant', said to have been ten and a half feet tall!

The Fair was held once a year but several days every week there was a busy street market in Borough High Street. It was one of the oldest markets in London with a history going back at least to 1276 and even earlier, when it was held on Old London Bridge.

Stalls were set up along both sides of the street from the Bridgefoot to St Margaret's Church; farmers with their bacon near the Bridge, then their wives selling butter, then the fishwives crying 'fresh fish from the Thames', then bakers, vegetable-sellers and butchers, who drove live animals to market. Ordinances of the market instructed them not to bring any oxen, bullocks or cows "that are soe wilde that they run awaie as often it happeneth". Farmers with sacks of flour could keep them dry in a market house near St Thomas' Street.

You can imagine the crowds, the noise and the lively scenes, but also the traffic jams, as horses, carts, coaches and carriages, tried to get through between the stalls on the main road to London. In 1756, due to congestion, the market was moved off the public highway and in 1762, for similar reasons, and because of rowdiness, Southwark Fair was held for the last time.

The market, however, did not come to an end. It moved to a piece of land known as the Triangle where it has become the famous Borough Market of today. Over the years its business completely changed. It became one of the great wholesale fruit and vegetable markets of London. Your local greengrocer may have gone there very early this morning to stock up his shop with produce from all over the world. It has a large covered Victorian market hall and a 20th century entrance and offices in Southwark Street. Unlike Covent Garden, the Borough Market stayed put in its old home. Many of the traders have fathers and grandfathers who had stalls there. Before 1756 the market was under the City of London when it then passed to the parishioners of St Saviour's.

Crime and Punishment

Old Southwark had more than its fair share of "felons, thieves, malefactors and disturbers of the peace". This was because, as the citizens of London complained to the King in 1327, criminals could flee across old London Bridge and the City Officers could not arrest them. Royal Charters were therefore issued granting the City rights over Southwark. In 1550 Southwark became 'The Bridge Ward Without', the ward (district) of the City of London 'without' (outside) the City Walls. There are still stones marking the boundaries of the City's authority. One is in the garden of Southwark Cathedral, facing Cathedral Street.

The Lord Mayor and Aldermen, or their officers, held courts to try offenders in the court-house on St Margaret's Hill. For example, dishonest traders at the Borough Market were punished. A butcher who sold bad meat might have to stand in the pillory while the smelly meat was burnt in front of him. The map of 1542 shows a pillory, with holes for head and arms, right in the middle of Borough High Street, and a second one in Tooley Street. Another old map

shows the stocks and a 'cage' (small prison) south of the court-house. The City held a special court during Southwark Fair called the 'Court of Pie Powder', from the French 'pieds poudreux' meaning dusty feet. It was for people who had come to the Fair from outside Southwark, and had travelled along the unmade roads of those days.

In spite of efforts by the City, old Southwark still had some good hidey-holes for villains, the worst being the district known as 'The Mint', around Mint Street, which was then ■ maze of narrow streets and filthy alleys. It claimed to be a 'liberty' outside the authority of the City or any other power. It was the haunt of thieves such as two notorious highwaymen, Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild, both of whom were finally hanged at Tyburn. No wonder that the play, *The Beggars' Opera*, has a character called 'Matt of the Mint' as the leader of a gang of thieves.

The Mint was officially cleared of its debtors and criminals by an Act of Parliament in 1723 but, over 100 years later, Charles Dickens wrote of Lant Street "the population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day (when the rent was due!) and generally by night." When the district was rebuilt, the streets were given names from Dickens' novels, such as Weller Street, Copperfield Street, and Little Dorrit Court.

*"Five jails, or prisons are in Southwark placed
The Counter once St Margaret's Church defaced
The Marshalsea, the King's Bench and White Lyon,
Then there's the Clink where handsome lodgings be."*

John Taylor 1630

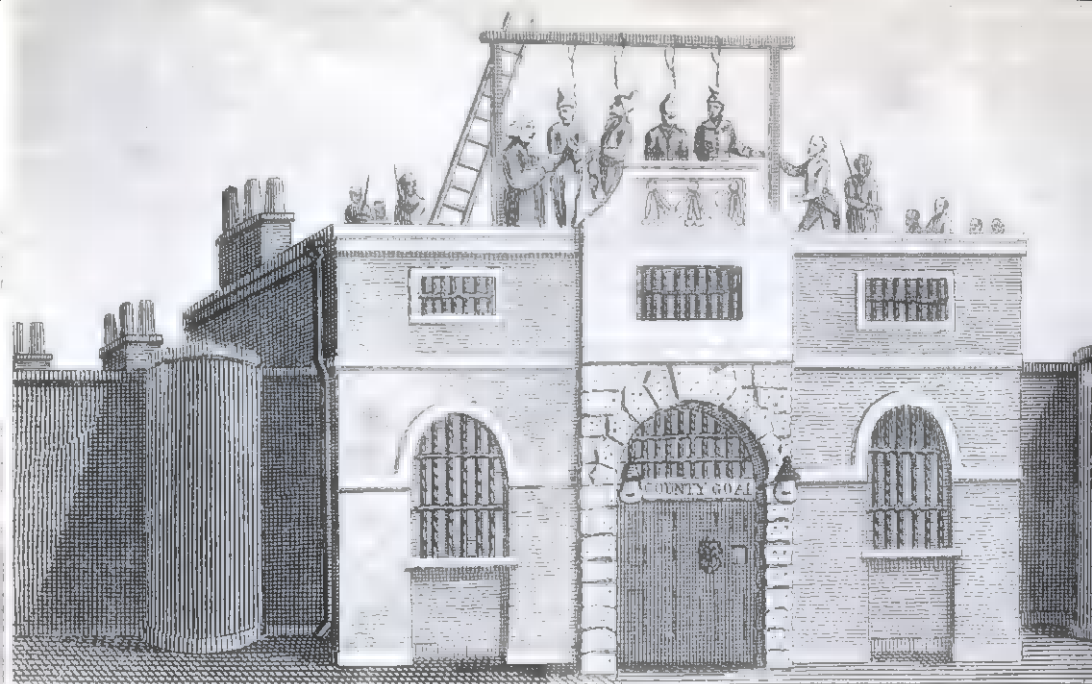
Except for the Clink, in Clink Street, all these grim prisons were in Borough High Street, next door to the famous inns, overlooking the market and fair. Why were there so many? The Counter or Borough Compter was for those convicted at the court-house "once St Margaret's Church". The other prisons were not just for local criminals. They were probably placed in Southwark because it was near to London but outside the City walls. The King's Bench and the Marshalsea were royal prisons. The White Lyon, which had earlier been an inn, was a jail for the County of Surrey.

Prisoners in all the prisons suffered terribly and many died of the dreaded jail fever brought on by overcrowding and unhealthy conditions. A prisoner in the King's Bench wrote "As to health, it hath more diseases in it than the pest-house in the plague-time ... it stinks more than the Lord Mayor's dog-house". Prisoners could die of starvation as they were expected to beg their food from passers-by. They might also suffer torture.

Not all prisoners were criminals. Unhappily, even today, in some countries there are "prisoners of conscience". So it was in England in the 16th and 17th centuries. Brave Christians, sometimes Protestants and sometimes Roman Catholics, were put in prison because their religious beliefs differed from those in power.

Many people were in prison simply because they had got into debt and, unless they had wealthy friends, might well stay there for the rest of their lives. Charles Dickens' father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea, fortunately for only a short time. While he was there, young Charles had lodgings in Lant Street, near where Charles Dickens School is today.

Dickens also knew the Horsemonger Lane Gaol in what is now Harper Road. On the roof were gallows where, in 1849, Mr and Mrs Manning from Bermondsey were publicly hanged



Horsemonger Lane Gaol

for the murder of their lodger. It was a horrifying crime but, as Dickens wrote in a famous letter to *The Times* newspaper, even more horrifying was the behaviour of the crowds who gathered to watch. Twenty years later public executions were abolished in England.

Fortunately all these old prisons have long since been demolished. The site of the Horsemonger Lane Gaol was made into the Newington Gardens Recreation Ground which some old people still call 'the gaol playground'. Next to the playground is the Crown Court in Newington Causeway. The King's (or Queen's) Bench, earlier on the east side of Borough High Street, was moved in 1758 to the corner of Borough Road. It was replaced by Victorian blocks of flats known as Queen's Buildings but they too have made way for the new Scovell housing estate. Counter Court, between Borough High Street and Southwark Street, marks the site of the Counter Prison. All that is left of any of the old prisons is one high brick wall of the Marshalsea. It overshadows the alley leading to the Local Studies Library. An old pump from the Marshalsea is in the Cuming Museum.

Two great hospitals

Until 1862, two great hospitals, St Thomas' and Guy's, faced each other across St Thomas' Street, just off Borough High Street. Guy's is still there. St Thomas' has moved to the Lambeth riverside.

St Thomas' was founded about 800 years ago by the Priory of St Mary Overie. Over the years it grew into a large hospital stretching the length of St Thomas' Street, with a church for the people of St Thomas' parish. Among these in the 16th century were famous craftsmen, who made stained glass windows for King's College, Cambridge and printed the first Bible in English to be printed in England.

Three centuries later it was at St Thomas' Hospital that modern nursing began. In earlier times nurses were untrained and often rough or even drunk. After the Crimean War, Florence Nightingale founded here the 'Nightingale School', the first training school for nurses in the world.

Eventually St Thomas' had to move to make way for an extension to London Bridge Station. Its buildings were demolished except for one block, which is now occupied by the post office in Borough High Street. The church, a fine building of Queen Anne's reign, also survives and but is now used for other purposes. Next to the church is a wide gateway, once the side entrance to the hospital, and houses which were the homes of officials such as the treasurer and the apothecary (chemist).

But climb the stairs in the church tower and a surprise awaits you. Here is an old operating theatre of the hospital, only rediscovered in 1956. It has a narrow wooden table where surgeons performed operations, without anaesthetics. Underneath there is a box of sawdust to catch the blood! Also in the roof is the Herb Garret where the apothecary stored and mixed herbs for medicine.



Guy's Hospital, front quadrangle, c 1890



St Thomas' Hospital, c1861

Guy's Hospital was founded in 1726 by Thomas Guy, the son of a river boatman, of Fair Street, Bermondsey. Guy made a fortune, largely through clever investments, and became a Governor of St Thomas'. When he saw that this hospital, large as it was, could not take in all the patients needing care - especially those considered to be incurable - he decided to use much of his fortune to build another hospital across the road. In his will he left £220,000 to maintain 'Guy's Hospital'.

The Latin motto over the entrance reads "Dare quam accipere", "(it is more blessed) to give than to receive". The statue of Guy, by the sculptor Peter Scheemakers, stands in the centre of the oldest part of the hospital. The hospital grew, thanks to many later benefactors, for example William Morris, Lord Nuffield, the man who started Morris Motors. His statue is in an inner courtyard.

Behind the fairly low old buildings rises the 11-storey New Guy's House opened in 1961, and the 30-storey Guy's Tower opened in 1975. Floors 9-12 of this are the Evelina Children's Department which replaces the Evelina Children's Hospital, Southwark Bridge Road, demolished 1975. Guy's now has beds for about 1,000 patients and, in the training of doctors and nurses, is one of the great teaching hospitals of the world.

John Keats, the poet, was a medical student at Guy's.

St George the Martyr church and parish

Look up from Borough High Street, Newington Causeway, Long Lane, Great Dover Street or Tabard Street and you will see, standing out from the modern developments, the spire of St George the Martyr. There has been a church at this road junction since at least 1122, when the right to appoint the rector was given to Bermondsey Abbey.

The church was rebuilt in 1736 by the architect John Price. As you go in, notice the columns, like those of a Greek temple, on either side of the entrance, and the carvings of angels above it. Over the years the people of St George the Martyr have cared for their church and added to its beauty. Sit down in one of the old pews and look up. The ceiling was designed by Basil Champneys in 1897 and renewed after war-time damage. It shows the Glory of God breaking through the clouds. The words are from two hymns of praise - the *Te Deum* "We praise thee O God" and the *Benedicite* "All ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord".

The bells and the organ are from the older church and some stones from it are on show in the crypt. The font is a copy of the old one. There are Registers from 1602 to the present day of all the babies christened in the church and also of people married or buried there. On the walls are memorials to people who lived in the parish. The small open space across Tabard Street was once part of the Burial Ground.

People call St George the Martyr "Little Dorrit's church". According to the novel by Charles Dickens, Little Dorrit lived with her father in Marshalsea Prison just north of the church, where Dickens' own father had once been imprisoned. One night, on returning home too late, Little Dorrit slept in the church vestry using one of the old registers as a pillow. The modern east window has a small picture of Little Dorrit.



St George the Martyr Church, c1925

St George the Martyr was once the church for a large parish stretching south down Old Kent Road nearly to Albany Road and west to what is now the Imperial War Museum. Its northern boundary was Newcomen Street where there is a parish boundary mark with the letters St. G.M. The people who lived north of this street were in St Saviour's parish.

St George the Martyr, like other parishes, had its own local government. The Churchwardens had many duties. In 1738, long before everyone could get water from a tap, they decided to pay £1 a year to have water piped from the Thames at Dockhead. It was stored in the old lead cistern which is now placed in the church near the font. A Committee known as the Vestry governed the parish, meeting round the oak table which is still in the church vestry. The Vestry Minutes from 1716 are in Southwark Local Studies Library. In 1868 the Vestry decided to have the church clock lit by gas lighting but, to save money, they only lit up three of the four faces. One clock face is still black, although the clock is now lit by electricity.

John Harvard

No. 211 Borough High Street, part of one of the modern buildings in the street, houses the John Harvard Library. The busy lending department provides for readers, young and old, who live and work in the neighbourhood. Behind it is the separate Local Studies Library where you can study material on the history of the whole London Borough of Southwark. The name John Harvard is a reminder of a famous son of the Borough and one well suited to have its library named after him.

Born in 1607, John Harvard was christened at St Saviour's Church, now Southwark Cathedral, and attended St Saviour's Grammar School, before going to Cambridge University. His father was a well-to-do Borough High Street butcher and also owned one of the famous inns, the Queen's Head.

Harvard lived in a great period in Southwark's history, when Shakespeare's plays were having their first productions at the Globe Theatre on Bankside. But he also lived at a sad time. Like so many other families he lost nearly all his close relations - his father and four of his brothers and sisters - in an outbreak of the plague in 1625. John was left with all the family fortune but no wonder, perhaps, that he and his wife, Ann, decided to leave Southwark and start a new life in America, where the first colonies were just being founded. They arrived in Boston on 26th June 1637 and took a house near Charlestown. John soon became a member of the Committee which was making laws for the Colony.

Sadly he died only a year later, not yet 31, but his Will benefited his 'New England' home right down to the present day. As it says in the records "It pleased God to stir up the heart of Mr Harvard, a godly gentleman and lover of learning, to give one half of his Estate towards the erecting of a college, and all his library". This gift was so important that the college, which was founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was named Harvard. It grew into the great Harvard University, the equal in America of Cambridge or Oxford in England. John Harvard's library was also of much value. This young tradesman's son from Southwark had brought with him across the Atlantic, over 400 volumes, including books on religion, works in Latin and Greek, grammar books which he

used at St Saviour's School, and even a copy of Aesop's Fables which he probably enjoyed as a child.

Harvard University has not forgotten its Southwark benefactor. A chapel in Southwark Cathedral has been restored "by the sons and friends of Harvard University" and named in his memory the Harvard Chapel. John Harvard Library was officially opened in 1977 by the American Cultural Attaché. Southwark is certainly proud to have been the birthplace of John Harvard.

Documentaries

You must often have seen TV 'documentaries' - programmes based on real life. In the Local Studies Library there are documents, or archives, of St George the Martyr and other parishes, which could suggest hundreds of 'documentaries', though they may need scholars to transcribe the old handwriting.

Can you picture, for example, the suffering of people during the outbreak of the Plague? Southwark was 'visited' by this dreaded disease not only in 1665, the year of the Great Plague of London, but also in 1625 and 1636 and other years. One of the oldest archives is a notebook entitled "The account of money for the use of the parishioners of St George the Martyr visited by the plague 1636-37". Addresses include the Mint, Long Lane and Kent Street.

Many of the archives are concerned with the 'Poor Law'. Before there was any National Insurance, householders had to pay Poor Rates to help the old, sick and unemployed in their own parish. Ratebooks for St George the Martyr, listing names and addresses of ratepayers, go back to the 17th century.

Many 'Poor Law' documents show the sadder side of life in the past. For example the Workhouse Minutes give the 'Bill of fare' for St George the Martyr Workhouse, in 1729. Some days of the week the poor inmates had just porridge or broth for

both breakfast and dinner. Some people think that Dickens was picturing this workhouse when he wrote *Oliver Twist*. Fortunately, all that is left of it are some of the walls around the Mint Street Adventure Playground.

Poor children, like Oliver, were apprenticed to learn a trade. Some were sent all the way to the cotton and wool mills of northern England. A letter of about 1780 addressed to St George the Martyr from a firm in Cheshire, sets out a "plan for disposing of 200 parish children". It says "we take them at 9 or 10 years old... they labour from 6am to 7pm in summer and from 7am to 8pm in winter. In the evening after work they wash, get their suppers and go to school, from thence to bed."

The Library has many apprenticeship documents, or 'indentures'. One reads "Ann Blake, aged ten years, a poor child, apprentice to Jonas Whitaker of Burley in the County of York, calico weavers, with him to dwell and serve - until she shall accomplish her full age of 21 years". Ann received no wages but her master promised "sufficient meat, drink and apparel (clothes), lodgings and washing."

When poor people from other parts of the country came to Southwark, probably looking for work, they were often sent back as ratepayers did not want to pay out 'poor relief' for people not born or legally settled in their parish. What story lies behind this 'removal order' of St George the Martyr parish, dated 14th December, 1743? "To remove Judith Burnell, wife of John Burnell, now abroad, and her two children, Mary aged four and Anthony about one year, to the village of Alkington in Gloucester, where they were last legally settled".

'Fire Rewards' are a different type of document. On 27th April, 1781 one James Stretton was awarded twenty shillings (£1) because "he brought to a fire at the workshop of Mr Fowler in Kent Street, the engine belonging to the Sun Fire Office in good order with a suction hose, leather pipe and stand cock". There was no London Fire Brigade in those days. Horse drawn fire engines raced to the fire to win the reward. Over the office of Field and Son, Borough High Street, there is still the trademark of the Sun Fire Insurance Company.

A place to live

'The Borough' is certainly rich in history, but it is also a place where people live. The oldest and most beautiful houses are in the Trinity Church Square Conservation Area. Those around the Square with Trinity Street and Falmouth Road were built about 1831 and Merrick Square about 1856. They look almost as when the first residents moved in, arriving probably by carriage and horse. Even the electric street lights are copies of old gas lamps.

The estate, in the old parish of St Mary Newington, belongs to Trinity House to whom the land was given in 1661, by Christopher Merrick, 'for relieving poor, aged, sick seamen of this country'. Notice the Trinity House coat of arms of four sailing ships, on a wall in Trinity Street.

In the centre of Trinity Church Square is the former Holy Trinity Church, designed by the architect, Francis Bedford. It was restored after war-time damage and is now used by London orchestras for rehearsals. Its new name is the Henry Wood Hall, after the famous conductor. The statue in the garden, said to be King Alfred, is probably from Westminster Hall and about 600 years old.



Trinity Church Square, 1830

Not everyone lived in such fine houses as Trinity Church Square. When they were built the area was becoming one of the poorest and most crowded in London. Today only about 8,000 people live in the old parish of St George the Martyr, but in 1851 there were over 51,000 and in 1901 over 60,000. As a Medical Officer of Health wrote in 1858, "Overcrowding is the normal state of our poorer districts. Small houses of four rooms are usually inhabited by three or four families and by 8, 16 or 24 persons". Maypole Alley, where Maypole House now stands, was described as "a nest of infectious diseases".

Gradually the old slums were swept away. Marshalsea Road was opened up across the Mint district and the blocks of flats now under the Peabody Trust were built by the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company. Over Douglas Buildings is the date 1886. Families who moved in over a hundred years ago were no doubt pleased to find, perhaps for the first time in their lives, sinks with running water, proper drains and toilets - things we now take for granted.

Tabard Street was another area of overcrowded courts and alleys. It was here that the Charterhouse Mission was founded in 1884 by old boys of Charterhouse School. The Mission Church, St Hugh's, was dedicated in 1898. Charterhouse-in-Southwark continues its good work today but in very different surroundings. In 1887 the Metropolitan Board of Works began clearing the slums, which were later replaced by blocks of flats and an open space - Tabard Gardens.

Most people in north Southwark now live in blocks of flats, built either by the London County Council, later the Greater London Council, or by Southwark Borough Council. Octavia Hill, a lady who did much to improve London's housing, had other ideas. She planned the pretty cottages in Redcross Way, Ayres Street and Sudrey Street on land belonging to the Church Commissioners. Thanks to her efforts also Redcross Gardens were laid out, where previously there had been only a rubbish dump. Notice the mosaic picture of the 'Sower' erected by Octavia Hill in 1896.

Some of the newest housing is the Scovell Estate built by the London Borough of Southwark in 1978. Like the Octavia Hill cottages it consists of individual houses, two storeys high, and seems almost like a village in the midst of London.

Schools, old and new

The children of the Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie go to new school buildings, but to the oldest school still in North Southwark. Like other 'parish' or 'charity' schools, it was founded long before there was any state education. In 1681 Mrs Dorothy Applebee gave £20 for a 'free' school in St Saviour's parish. It was originally in the churchyard, later in Union Street and, since 1977, in Redcross Way. Next to it is St Joseph's, the Roman Catholic Church School. St George the Martyr Parish Schools, founded in 1698, have amalgamated with St Jude's School, Colnbrook Street.

Mrs Elizabeth Newcomen, who lived about the same time as Mrs Applebee, left houses to provide education and clothes for boys and girls. You can still find her property mark 'Mrs N' on buildings in Newcomen Street. The Elizabeth Newcomen School closed in 1970. Elizabeth Newcomen's and other old charities are still used to help young people.

Joseph Lancaster School, Harper Road, is named after a local man who became famous for schools that he founded. He lived in Kent Street, which was then a very crowded neighbourhood, with hundreds of poor children who had no chance of learning to read and write. He started his first school in 1798 in Borough Road. As he did not have enough money to pay assistant teachers, he used 'monitors', older boys and girls, to teach the younger ones. He said that in this way one master could manage 1,000 children! To save buying books they had pages of the Bible in large print hanging on the walls and repeated their lessons by heart. They wrote on slates.

Schools following the 'Monitorial' system were soon opening all over England, and in other countries, and monitors came to Joseph Lancaster's school for training. In 1818 a black boy, William Jagon, was monitor-general. He later became Master of a school in the West Indies. To carry on the work the British and Foreign Schools' Society was founded and built a Teachers' Training College in Borough Road. In 1890 the building was taken over by the Borough Polytechnic, now part of the huge South Bank University.



St Saviour's Grammar School for Boys, 1815

After 1870 the State began providing schools. Those in Southwark came under the London School Board. According to the plaque in Toulmin Street, Charles Dickens School was once the Lant Street Board School, built in 1877. Compare the architecture of this 'Board School' with Geoffrey Chaucer School, built in 1961.

The small statue of Elizabeth I on the outside of St Saviour's and St Olave's Girls' School, New Kent Road, opened in 1903, is a reminder of the oldest schools in North Southwark of which there are records. Grammar schools for St Saviour's parish and St Olave's, Tooley Street, were both founded over 400 years ago in Queen Elizabeth I's reign. The boys' school moved to Orpington in 1968.

Shops and trade

About 300 years ago Mr Nicholas Hare, with his son William, had a grocer's shop in Borough High Street. Their shop sign, a hare and the sun, is now in the Cuming Museum.

For centuries, Borough High Street was a shopping street. The oldest shops and houses had narrow fronts, just enough for a front door and windows on the street, but with plenty of room behind for buildings and back gardens. These long narrow building sites, some still existing today, are known as 'burgage plots', plots of land in a borough.

In Victorian times Borough High Street was especially busy and prosperous. In 1831 old London Bridge had been replaced by a new bridge, a little to the west, and the northern part of the street was re-aligned and widened. New roads already linked it with Blackfriars Road and the rest of London, the first being Borough Road, opened in 1751. Union Street, opened in 1781, still has a few old shopfronts - for example nos. 59-61. Southwark Street, opened in 1864, has some grand Victorian warehouses and office buildings.

Shoppers for fashionable clothes or furniture came to 'the Borough' from other parts by horse-bus or by train to London Bridge. Old tradesmen's advertisements show what the shops were like; Brooks & Co. at nos 145-149 was a magnificent looking store with ladies arriving by carriage to buy their 'shawls and mantles'. William Tarn & Co., Newington Causeway and New Kent Road, had their own workshops for reproducing "the latest Paris fashions". All these grand stores have now gone. Above the modern shopfronts you can still see the Victorian facades and sometimes the old names.

The 'Borough' was not only shops; it was also a place where things were made. Kent Street was described in 1720 as "chiefly inhabited by broom men" who had yards with "vast stocks of birch and broom staves". No vacuum cleaners in those days!



The Hop and Malt Exchange building, Southwark Street, Borough

Brandon House is built on the site of Nettlefold and Moser's, an ironmonger's business handed down over 100 years in the Moser family. When all road traffic was horse-drawn they had a factory which could turn out five tons of horse-shoe nails weekly. There were many such family firms. Smith Kendon Ltd. were making sweets in 128 Borough High Street for over 100 years until 1974. Stevenson's ironmongers was a name in 'the Borough' for over a century. Probably the oldest business still in the family is Field & Son. The present Mr Field is the seventh generation in a firm of estate agents established in 1804.

The 'Borough' was especially noted as the centre of the English hop-trade. Sacks of hops, or hop pockets, were brought from Kent, Worcester and Hereford and from abroad to be stored in the hop merchants' warehouses and then sold to brewers for making beer, notably Barclay Perkins in Park Street and Courage's on the Bermondsey riverside. Old cranes which lifted hop sacks or other goods may be seen high up outside some old buildings - for example in Chapel Yard, Union Street.

In 1866 a magnificent Hop and Malt Exchange was erected in Southwark Street. Like all hop buildings it had a glass roof so that the quality of hops could be examined by good natural lighting. It is now used for offices; but notice the stone carving of hop-pickers over the entrance and the hops in the ironwork of the gates.

The hop-trade left 'the Borough' in about 1970, when brewers began using hop essence and hop pellets instead of raw hops. The hop factors and brewers have moved out of Southwark and hop-picking itself has been mechanised. Only older people can now remember going hopping in the fields of Kent.

Two World Wars

In the centre of Borough High Street, opposite the George Inn, is a bronze figure of a soldier. It is a memorial to the 334 men of St Saviour's Parish who gave their lives in World War I, 1914-1918. The inscription reads "May their memory live for ever in the minds of men", but traffic hurries by without noticing. Walk round the memorial and look at the pictures on the stone base of Great War ships, guns and aeroplanes. In the *South London Press* of the time are stories of some of the heroes, for example - Corporal Henry Cross of Mermaid Court, who won the Victoria Cross for recapturing, single-handed, two machine guns which had fallen into enemy hands.

In World War II, 1939-1945, everyone was involved. 925 civilians died in the old Metropolitan Borough of Southwark, many of them in 'the Borough' area. The printed list of Civilian War Dead gives their names and addresses. 16th October 1940, was a terrible night when crowded Queen's Buildings, Scovell Road, got a direct hit, and even those who had taken refuge in the air-raid shelters did not escape as a water-main burst and flooded them.

There was only one safe, deep shelter; the disused section of an old underground line - the City and South London Railway. In 1900 the line north of Borough Station had been rebuilt on a slightly different route, that now taken by the Northern Line, and the disused section had been sealed up. It was reopened in 1940 as an air-raid shelter for up to 8,000 people. A concrete floor covered the old railway tracks and at first people slept on it, propped up against the walls. Later bunk beds were installed with numbers so that regular shelterers could come back night after night to their own bunks. Six entrances were made so people could get down quickly when the siren sounded. One was in Union Street playground and another in the Garden of St George the Martyr. All have now been filled in.

When people came out of the shelters they might find their homes in ruins and have to go to a 'Rest Centre'. Charles Dickens School was used for this purpose.



The St Saviour's War Memorial at its unveiling in 1922

Guy's Hospital suffered badly in the Blitz of 1940-41, being hit by high explosive and incendiary bombs. Yet the healing work of the hospital never stopped. During the war years, in addition to ordinary patients, 3,089 air-raid injuries were treated by the doctors and nurses of Guy's.

A Borough panorama

If film or video could have recorded 'the Borough' for the past 2,000 years, you would have a panorama of all periods of English history, with commentary from some of them by such great names as Chaucer, Stow, Pepys and Dickens.

Just as TV news often seems to concentrate on wars and riots rather than on peaceful days, so you might particularly notice such events in pictures of 'the Borough'. In 1066 all of its buildings were set on fire by William the Conqueror as he advanced towards London after winning the Battle of Hastings. In 1381 Wat Tyler, leading the Peasants' Revolt, was joined by men of Southwark and broke open the Marshalsea Prison before crossing into the City. In 1450 another rebel, Jack Cade, and his followers, made the White Hart their headquarters. During the Civil War between 'Cavaliers' and 'Roundheads' one of the ring of forts built by Parliament to defend London was near the site of the Borough High Street police station. In the 17th century Southwark, like the City, suffered from plague and fire and in the 20th century from two world wars.

Royal occasions bring happier pictures. Many kings and queens have come this way: Henry V after his victory at Agincourt and Charles II returning from exile. Borough High Street was splendidly decorated for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. George VI and Queen Elizabeth, now the Queen Mother, made a visit during the worst period of the war.

These are just a few of the newsworthy events, but all the while the ordinary busy life of 'the Borough' went on. Some aspects of it were bad, its prisons and its poverty, many good, its inns, market and fair, hospitals, trade and industry; and two great churches, St Saviour's and St George the Martyr. Over the centuries this neighbourhood has been in turn a suburb of Roman London, an Anglo-Saxon burgh, a market town, a travellers' meeting-point at the gateway to London Bridge and a crowded 'inner city' area of Victorian London. In 1900 it became part of the Metropolitan Borough of Southwark and, in 1965, of the London Borough of Southwark.

In the lifetime of older people much that they remember seems to have gone. Industry and trade have largely moved out. With a smaller population and easier transport to the West End, Borough High Street is no longer an important shopping street. Its few shops are small grocers, and chemists for local needs. Many old buildings have been demolished and office blocks of big national and international companies tend to replace them.

At the same time, people realise that the Borough High Street is a street of history. The neighbourhood has been made a Conservation Area. Redevelopment is going on behind Borough High Street and St Thomas' Street but it is well hidden by old buildings which have now been listed. There are many 'listed' buildings also in Newcomen Street, Southwark Street, Stoney Street, Union Street and Trinity Church Square.

Visitors find this part of Southwark a fascinating place. They come mainly to see the 'Little Dorrit Church', the George Inn, Southwark Cathedral, and nearby Bankside. But if you live here, or have more time, you can enjoy discovering the less obvious survivals from the past and getting to know the whole character of the neighbourhood.

So now go out and explore every inch of it, and then come back to the Local Studies Library, right in the heart of it, where you can begin a real study of 'The Story of the Borough'.

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Southwark
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